

L E T T E R S

OF

THE MARCHIONESS

OF

P O M P A D O U R.

V O L. II.

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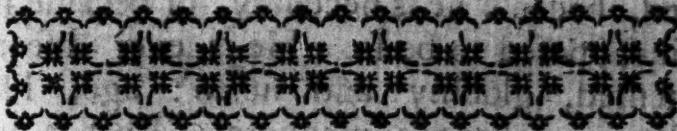
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THE MARY CHIONESS

POMEROY

VOL II

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LETTER LII.

To the countess du BARAIL.

YOU may assure yourself that the young marquis will not be forgot, unless I lose all my influence. But is it not my duty to recommend persons of merit and those whom I esteem? Do you fear the failure of my memory? No, madam, I shall ever remember to love you tenderly, and to oblige you effectually. The court was never so splendid as at present in the midst of public distress. We have half a dozen German highnesses, who make a wondrous clutter. There is one particularly who deigns to pay his court to me. Men, especially princes, do nothing for nothing: wherefore I guess him to have some views. But I shall let him dance attendance, and perhaps shall serve him: for I have a good heart, and he has merit. The old vizier

G 2 grows

* grows insupportable; but he is supported, because he is necessary, or because he is supposed to be so. He is ever discontented, gloomy and sullen: age, like honors, changes manners. That is un-sufferable; and yet it must be suffered. Farewel, my dear friend, I shall never change to you; for I have too much pleasure in loving you and in telling you so. Give a thousand kisses for me to your little girl, and make a thousand compliments to the great man, &c.

• The marshal Belle Isle.

LET.

LETTER LIII.

To Mr. de VOLTAIRE. 1762.

I AM already apprised of the bloody tragedy that has been acted at Toulouse. Your charity for the unhappy family of Calas, and your zeal in its service, do honor to your feelings, and correspond with mine. You are a sort of sentinel of state: you make it a duty to discover great crimes and great abuses: you must be admirable in every thing. So far as I can hitherto judge, the judges of Toulouse have been very precipitate and very cruel. There is nothing but contradiction and improbability in their proceedings; which is at first sight a strong prejudice against them. Truth and justice admit neither contradictions nor improbabilities. A celebrated advocate and worthy man is said to be drawing up a memorial of that unfortunate affair. I shall read it the moment it appears, in order to get thoroughly acquainted with the fact in question; after which, I shall boldly employ all my interest to avenge the cause of justice and

of oppressed virtue. I am charmed, sir, that you have addressed yourself to me : this confidence must give me a little vanity, by showing that you think I have a good heart. Yes, I have, or fancy I have one ; and on this occasion I shall endeavor to earn your esteem and that of all like you.

I am, &c.

L E T.

bit 150. of well oile world with red spado
of 1000. shillings and a half to their master
to no tales or charges. 1761.

LETTER LIV.

To the marquis of BEAUSSAC. 1762.

LTHANK you sincerely for all your cares, and beg of you to continue them. Accounts from Russia are actually more important than ever. We have long known that the new czar loves not France: we have lost a good friend in Elizabeth. Your Peter III. did not even take the trouble to conceal his sentiments in his aunt's life time; and I have heard that he never failed to be arch upon the defeats of the Russians or of the allies, when any opportunity offered: which spoke at once a bad heart and a sorry understanding. Nobody doubts but that prince will speedily quit the alliance: nay, we shall be very happy, if he join not our enemies. In such circumstance your ministry is peculiarly delicate: you will every where tread upon thorns. Yet, despotic as a czar of Russia is, it is not believed that the present dares abruptly abandon the common cause. Such a step, if precipitate, would not fail to offend the nation. The Russians know how to

G 4. obey;

obey; but they know also how to get rid of their masters, when these venture to abuse their power. The revolution of 1740, to which he owes his crown, is a recent example, which will perhaps keep him in awe. The defection of that prince would be particularly deplorable in the present juncture; for the Alexander of the North is undone, if the war last four months longer. Try therefore to parry the blow, if it be possible to parry it.

The furs you sent me are very beautiful, and I thank you much for your trouble. They are superior to those of Canada: but alas! those of Canada were ours.

The king is highly satisfied with your conduct; he has great confidence in your abilities; and nobody suspects, if the czar should forsake his friends, your having neglected any thing to prevent him.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LV.

To the duke of FITZ-JAMES. 1762.

YOU are much in the right, my lord-duke ; the affair of the unfortunate Calas makes one shudder. He was to be pitied for being a hugonot ; but was not therefore to be treated like a highwayman. It seems impossible that he should have committed the crime of which he stood accused : that is not in nature. Yet he is dead, his family is branded, and his cruel judges will not repent. The king's tender heart suffered much at the recital of that strange adventure, and all France cries out vengeance. The poor man shall be avenged. Those Toulousans are hot-headed folks, and have more religion in their way than they should have to be good christians. May God be pleased to convert and humanise them !

You joke me, my lord, with your thanks. There was a post vacant that suited you : you deserved it, I mentioned it to his majesty, and that is all. This little service has done me more pleasure

than it could you. Set out then for the army, and be the prince of Condé's friend. It strikes me in the head, that that youth will make a figure: he has great examples in his family, and a good desire to imitate them. His talents for war will quickly display themselves: so much the better. France is no longer knowable; the race of great men is almost extinct: I hope you shall assist in reviving it, and wish with all my heart that fortune may treat you in a manner more worthy of you, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LVI.

To the duke of NIVERNOIS. 1762.

HOW do you do, my lord-duke? You shall see that your friends have not forgot you. But we must begin with the preface, which is *la salsa del libro*. You know that we have not very long made war, that we have gained nothing by it, that we stand in great need of peace with the English, and that the English stand perhaps in little less need of it than ourselves: Well then, the king resolved yesterday in his council to give you a small commission on this subject. You must therefore quit instantly your woods and your warren, and repair to Fontainbleau to receive your instructions. Thence you shall go to London, and make a bow to good king George, who looks for you, and invite him to be a friend of ours. The king did not at first know whom to charge with a negotiation so important and so delicate. A certain person hinted your name; upon which that gracious prince did some justice to your judgment, your talents, and your zeal.

zeal for his service, I heard him with pleasure, and was far enough from speaking against my conscience by speaking ill of you. I am sensible that this employment is rather unpleasing : it were a finer thing to be the ambassador of a victorious king than of a king vanquished. But you are a true Frenchman: the love of your country will surmount your every reluctance. The peace which I hope, is the only thing I now desire, or that can attach me to a little longer life. My health is not good; but, if I can see France at peace, her sovereign satisfied, his subjects easy after so many calamities, I shall have lived long enough. I salute your grace with all my heart: you will ever have one of the first places in the list of those I esteem, which is not a very long one, &c.

L E T-

LETTER LVII.

To the countess of Baschi. 1762.

MY dear friend (for this is a much nobler name than my lady-countess, and therefore I often make use of it) you ask me if I think still of you. Why do not you ask if I yet live? Could I forget your charms or your merit? At length I hope we shall have peace. It proves highly necessary for us, after the most fatal and most shameful war that has been waged since the days of Pharamond. The glory of the nation under Lewis XIV. has vanished like a dream, and on waking she finds only a sad reality of shame. What a time! my fair countess: the king is out of humor, and I am in tears, while the world believe us both extremely satisfied. Happiness is to be found neither in courts nor in ambition, but in modest and moderate hearts, which wish, hope, and ask nothing.

Valcourt said yesterday laughing, that half a dozen general officers should have been hanged by way of example, and that the English had been well served ever

ever since they had put an admiral to death. The king laughed none ; but his goodness of heart did not hinder him from saying, that such reasoning was not wholly ridiculous. The English have done us much mischief ; and we have done them a good deal : see whether here be any ground of consolation ; for we ought to take comfort where we can. Valcourt said also, that instead of suing for peace, we had nothing for it but to let the English take the rest of our colonies, withdraw our troops from Germany, and make a defensive war upon our frontiers ; while we should employ the greatest part of our forces in making descents, harrassing the enemy, annoying his trade, &c. that so the English would be fain to beg peace on their knees in less than two years, or to turn bankrupts to mankind. There is some shadow of reason in such talk ; but we should have taken this course two years ago : it is now too late.

I am mad with myself when I consider what persons I have recommended to sustain the honor of France, persons who were fit for nothing, and yet aspired at every thing ; who knew how to make bows and cringes, and ran afterwards into

to Germany to fight like women, and prove the derision of Europe. These reflexions overwhelm me and the king too. Some body asked the prince of Conti t'other day, how France had so degenerated, and why no more Turennes, or Villarses, or Saxes were to be seen. *It is,* said he, *since our wives have been too intimate with their footmen.* Alas! all is changed. Farewel, my sweet countess; I love you with all my heart.

LET-

LETTER LVIII.

To the marshal de SOUBISE. 1762.

WE are accustomed to receive bad news ; but we are not the less affected by it. That of your last battle has completed our consternation. You have again disappointed the king's expectations and mine, and we are all again in dejection. Numberless are the faults imputed to you in this affair, and we admire in spite of our hearts the wisdom of prince Ferdinand, who had promised to beat you, and has kept his word. He must, say your enemies, have relied strongly upon fortune, or upon your incapacity. As for your colleague, every body justifies and pities him. I believe them however in the wrong, who judge you so severely ; and myself, still more, who exposed you to it. Yet fear nothing, I shall take care of your interests, and shall endeavour to make your peace with the king, who is resolved to make his with his enemies. The old men who remember the last years of Lewis XIV. compare the present time with them. We have

have lost all, battles without number, a million of men, our colonies, our credit, and our honor. We have no more either money or resources. The king talked some time ago of putting himself at the head of his armies, to reanimate them by his presence. I imagine that step would have been advisable, but he was dissuaded from it. In the name of God, marshal, if things are not yet quite hopeless, endeavor to retrieve them, and to put us in condition of obtaining a more honorable peace. Above all, exert every effort to save Cassel, which would make one equivalent in the treaty of peace. Who is that brave Luckner, with whom I am deafened, and who has acquired so much glory at our expence? It must be owned that the English are too well served. I particularly hate and esteem that marquis of Granby, who must at least go halves in the glory of prince Ferdinand. I grant it is no easy matter to overcome such men, and we dread every moment to learn new disasters, unless you give a turn to fortune, which I wish with all my heart, without daring to expect it.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LIX.

To the duke of Choiseuil. 1762.

I AM out of order, and yet shall endeavor to answer you. Let me first tell you that the king is satisfied, and esteems you. The old marshal was too systematic; and system-mongers rarely succeed. Never was minister more unfortunate than he, except the Chamillard of the late king, who was made secretary at war, because he played well at billards. For my part, I verily believe he had more reputation than merit. The point is therefore to do better, and to repair his faults. You begin in very hard times; but your glory will be the greater, if you triumph over hardship, as I hope.

What passes among the Russians is unheard: what masters! what subjects! the empress Elizabeth dies, her nephew succeeds her, his consort supplants him; and all this in six months time. But then poor Peter was much in the wrong to

turn

turn Prussian soldier, and to fall out with his wife. I do not think the new Czarina is to be trusted or depended on, though she have taken for one of her principal pretexts the shameful peace concluded with the Prussian : be sure she will make no war upon him.

Oh horror ! horror ! horror !

Nor must we hope much from the Spaniards : I believe them sincere, but they are inactive and irresolute. As for Germany, all there is hopeless. Germany has ever been the grave of the French : in this war it has also been the grave of their glory. Thus the notable bugbear of the *family-compact* terminates in nothing. The English were alarmed at it : now they laugh with like reason at their own fears and our hopes. The safest therefore is to make peace : but the work will be difficult with an insolent people, the natural enemy of mankind, and especially of the French. My lord-duke, if your grace bring about this great affair, you will have the glory of saving your country. The business is not to make a solid peace : that is impossible. The English and French cannot long remain friends : the mutual enmity of the two nations, the rivalry of commerce, and the opposition of interests and alliances,

alliances, will soon put arms again into their hands. On which account I imagine we must endeavor to preserve some settlements in Africa and the Indies; as the only means of repairing and augmenting our marine, of saving our trade, of fortifying ourselves every where, and of attacking the English with more success and safety, when opportunity shall offer. The taking our merchantmen before the declaration of war was an infamous action, which France will never forget until she have taken vengeance. *How are the mighty fallen!* We give our enemies hair-dressers and wigmakers, ribbons and fashions, and they shall give us laws! I hope this will not last. Labor, my dear lord, to make peace on the most reasonable conditions that may be; after which prepare for war.

I am, &c.

L E T -

LETTER IX.

To the countess of Baschi. 1762.

I WANTED to write to you this morning, and my pen began already her course, when a woman whom you know, came and bluntly interrupted me. Come, Madam, said she to me, leave your letter and your compliments; we must take some diversion. I followed her growling; and away we went to take that same diversion at the jolly dutchesses, who did every thing in the world to amuse me, without being once able to succeed: I was too much out of humor. At length, however, entered a little angel, whom I could never tire of caressing; and who was the angel, but your daughter? Upon honor, the little dear is adorable: she has fine eyes, fine features; a winning air in all she says or does; much wit, sweetness, modesty, and good-nature: happy will be the man who shall have her, if he be worthy of her and of you. Her company dispelled my spleen, and the head-ake, which was beginning to seize me. Never did so pretty a mouth say so pleasing

pleasing things as that lovely child's. After abundance of play, and of laughter, we returned hither. To continue my entertainment, I sat down immediately to entertain you.

Pray, do you know that ill-looking fellow whose mouth runs from ear to ear? He was yesterday at the chapel-royal, fast by the fair marchioness of Gondi. She had seen him two or three times with ladies of her acquaintance, and had perhaps spoke to him with civility. What does the wight of woeful figure but take into his head that she is distractedly in love with him? At chapel therefore he perks without her perceiving it, and knows not by what stratagem to force himself into notice. But at length love is ingenious: he gives her arm a rude push, and makes her drop her prayer-book, in order to enjoy the satisfaction of picking it up, and kissing her hand. All succeeded to the kiss, which she had the address to avoid. The lady, on her return home, caused him to be told that his behavior had been grossly indecent, that she desired him never more to show her his face, and that she sincerely wished he might become as sensible as he was ugly. The word *ugly* was a thunder-stroke

stroke to the poor wretch, who fancies himself an Adonis. He sickened upon it : four physicians have not been able to keep the fever from his brain, and he lies at the point of death. If he do die, his story will be one of the most tragic in the history of self-love. But alas ! who , is without it ? There are ten moments in the day, that I think myself still very young and very handsome, to one that I think no such thing. Did the dutchess see you as she had said ? She is one of the very few valuable women. She has much religion, wit, and good-humor : Such are the persons I love, though I follow them but afar.

Wonders are related of another dutchess* : she is fit to be bound. Alas ! love, tender love is the cause. The other day she was so pleased with her lover, that she gave him her picture set in diamonds, which she had received the day before from her husband. But I must tell you that the fellow loves play still better than his mistress. Having lost deep, he makes no scruple to take the husband aside, and ask of him a hundred pistoles

* The dutchess of Beauvilliers.

pistoles upon this trinket. The poor dutchess maddens at this mark of contempt, and will needs renounce gallantry in good earnest. Nobody believes her: meantime she is a pitiable object. The passions are very dangerous and very ridiculous in certain characters. Happy they who love nothing! There is no news. We pass our time as usual in lassitude, and our ministers theirs in building castles in the air. The inhabitants of Dunkirk are preparing to celebrate a jubilee. Almost a hundred years have they had the happiness of being French, and they are about to hail it with solemn festivity: this will make the English merry too. For my own part, I rejoice to have such a friend as you, to whom I can open my soul, and say every thing without fear or reserve. Come, let me embrace you: but alas! my arms are too short.

I am, &c.

LET.

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LETTER LXI.

*To the lady-abess of CHELLES.**

1762.

I COMMEND to your prayers the king, France, and myself, with all the rest: *the prayers of the faithful avail much.* We are about to labor a peace; but it is God alone who can bestow it. It is a blessing, madam, which you are worthy to ask and to obtain. How happy are you to have quitted this low and wicked world! There are some fine ladies that envy me, and I envy their liberty. Reason, years, the misery of the times, contempt of the little vanities of courts, which are indeed pitiable when known, have cast me into a melancholy that makes me disrelish every thing. I desired grandeur, and am glutted with it. Yet must I wear joy on my countenance, while I have death at my heart. What is the matter

* Formerly mademoiselle de Rupelmonde.

with you? said a certain personage, you are not contented? Sir, said I, I am —— ready to cry, on finding myself forced to dissemble. The king remembers still that you were the ornament of his court; he regrets and admires you: he says you now serve a better master. Alas! I would fain serve that better master. I have an impression that the listlessness, and languor which overwhelm me are an invitation on his part: but I am weak, and continue to wear my chains. I salute you, madam, with all the respect and affection which your virtue claims. Love me, pity me, and pray for me, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LXII.

To the duke of NIVERNOIS. 1762.

YOU have then seen the capitol and the new Romans, as they call themselves : it will take you some time to love them. King George received you well, the nobility caress you, and the mobility hiss you : all that we had foreseen. The point is to stick to the main chance. You must talk to the pilot and officers of the vessel, and pay no regard to the crew murmuring in the hold. The story of your Canterbury-supper has afforded us much merriment. It is but just ; the peace is not made, and your host treated you as an enemy. The English, you say, have generally disapproved the conduct of that honest entertainer. The reparation is generous and sufficient ; but I do not believe you will ever sup with him again. We admire your dispatches : the king is highly pleased. We are equally ready and willing to yield Canada to the English : much good do it them ! But for the islands and Pondicherry, they must be saved at any price. As for the

ransom of the prisoners and the Canada-bills, there will be no difficulty: it is but a merchant's draft, to be paid at sight. I beg you may not forget to present my respects to the great lady: the trifle I sent her, is overpaid by her goodness in receiving it: we ever commend ourselves to her, &c.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LXIII.

To the countess of Baschi. 1762.

WHAT say you to the archbishop *? Is not he a pleasant personage to come and plague us with his bull and his brangles with the parliament, while we are in mortal anxieties about the success of the war, or the negotiations of peace? It is just as if one called out a man to part children fighting in the street, while his house is on fire.

I am much provoked, madam: what charms do you mean? I thought at first it was somebody looking at you that had stolen in the phrase on your account. Alas! my charms are gone before me. Let me beg of you for the future, to put what kindness you please into your letters, but no sort of compliment.

There is good news from London. The duke sends us word that the English know how to make war, but that they know not how to make peace. However, some

* — of Paris.

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sacrifices

sacrifices must be made : they return us our sugar and calicoes ; but we must give them up our muffs, and all the snows of Canada. Much good may they do them ! The loss is not great, except that of honor, which makes our blood run cold. Our friends have served us well.

I must, my dear, tell you a foolish story. The ambassador * whom you know, came this morning to pay me a visit, and after the first compliments he cries out : *Indeed, madam, you have fine eyes!* I turned towards him, and asked him gravely if he spoke to me. Ah ! to whom else should I be speaking ? said he : it is not surely to my wife. This speech made me laugh, and flattered my vanity so much, that I drest myself forthwith in rose-color like a little girl. But unfortunately passing before a looking glass, I renountered a meagre phyz of forty. I asked who that woman was : on being told it was myself, I threw off my rose-colored gown. But talk we seriously, my fair countess ; I love you with a tenderness at which I am sometimes surprised,

ed,

* The duke of Bedford.

ed, and of which I should never have believed myself susceptible for any woman. Be assured it is the greatest pleasure of my life : *Dolce vita amorosa : per che si tardi nel mio cor veniti?* It is of my friendship for you however that I speak : love deserves neither my encomiums nor my regrets. Take care of your health, if you have any regard for mine. The fair insensible salutes you, and has given me a kiss for you, &c.

LETTER LXIV.

To the duke of NIVERNOIS. 1762.

I MUST ever thank you, my lord-duke: you send us none but good tidings, and your letters themselves are charming. Politics, which render so many gloomy and jealous, do but render you more amiable. Methinks I see the London-rabble, with unmeaning face, gaze on you as on the rhinoceros, and then make faces at you. As for the higher people, you must, you say, speak well of them; nor do I doubt it. I have known persons of that country, who for manners, breeding, magnificence and sentiments could have set us lessons. You have the modesty to say that it is to your public character the reception is given. Not at all; I dare say it is to yourself. Your merit is seen and honored; and this you force me to tell you. You have been then on the royal exchange, and were hooted. But why went you thither? I would as soon go and expose myself in the black forest. The English populace is neither polished nor amiable; yet perhaps all

all the better. There are who think that if that people should ever become either, it would be no longer formidable.

As to the object of your mission, strive, my lord, on your part, to soften certain articles, as the New-foundland-fishery, which France cannot accept upon so shameful terms. We always rely on your wisdom and ingenuity. Mr. de Choiseuil does his best to second you here. Cultivate our friends: I desire you may present them with my respectful service, &c.

LETTER LXV.

To the duke of NIVERNOIS.

October, 1762.

I HEARTILY thank you, my lord-duke, for your attention and punctuality in imparting to me the progress of your negotiation. It goes on rapidly, and could not be in better hands. It was the opinion of the old marshal de Bellisle that there was no country in the world, where it was easier to sow dissension than in England: there must always be two parties; gain either, and you do your business, while they are doing the business of each other. He would also sometimes merrily say that, were he moneyed enough and mad enough to purchase the crown of England, nothing would be easier than to find auctioniers. After all, the English are good people: they are actually reasonable and sincere in their proceedings. The sole obstacle to the peace last year was the old fox Pitt: he was sensible of its necessity; but would have no hand in it, for fear of losing his favor with

with the populace, to whom he well judged it would be odious, and in order that he might distress his sovereign, whenever he should think fit. That man is questionless a very able minister; but he behaved not to us like a gentleman last year; nor do I know whether he behaves like an honest man to his own nation. His party is strong, and it is impossible to bribe so numerous a body: in such case, we must strengthen ourselves another way.

It is certain, my lord-duke, that you proceed with infinite address: this is an encomium you always merit. You will shortly have the glory of concluding the most necessary peace that ever was, and of laying an endless obligation upon your king and country.

Is it true that there are many French prisoners in England, who have married there, and set up manufactures of cambric and lawn? Inquire into this, if you please; and see whether it might be possible to prevent the loss of so many subjects to the king, and of so important a branch of trade.

To conclude, I wish you may pass your time as agreeably at London as the duke of Bedford does his at Paris: he takes

his pleasure, and appears very gay. His commission is not very troublesome : he has but to say yes or no to what is proposed to him ; which leaves him abundant leisure for entertainments. The English cannot laugh at home ; they must come to France for that purpose. As for you, my lord-duke, you have surely no time to unbend : business must entirely engross you : those sacred cares which concern one's country, are the pleasures of exalted souls. I salute you with all my heart : I hope you will think of the little purchases you know of, and that you will present my compliments to all our friends.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LXVI.

To the countess of BASCHI. 1762.

IT is a fortnight since I wrote to you, my sweet friend, that is to say, it is a fortnight since I had any pleasure: for at present I scarce know other than that of reading your letters and answering them. Take always good care of your health, and of your fine face, which I kiss tenderly.

We have had here old king Stanislaus: he is ever cheerful, though ever devout. His worthy daughter imitates him only in the latter: she is a saint whose very presence renders miserable sinners more miserable.

Stanislaus is fond of the jesuits, who take the care of his conscience and of his revenues: so both are in good hands. Yet through regard to his rank, his age and his virtues, the proscription of those honest brethren will not extend to Lorraine. That good prince would die of vexation; and it is desirable that he still should live for a pattern to kings, and the benefit of his people. A thing astonishing

ing at once and natural is the affection the Lorrains bear him. Some years ago he used to ride through the whole country in a calash. He was attended but by a single page in those tours, and amused himself by smoaking a pipe in the Turkish manner no less than six feet long. On its being represented to him one day that he thus exposed his sacred person ; *Ab ! what have I to fear,* said he, *am I not in the midst of my children ?* In my judgment, a sublime expression, which sovereigns ought well to ponder. Much were it to be wished that they tasted like him the happiness of being beloved, and that like him they deserved to be so. His goodness has gained him the surname of *beneficent* ; which is, to my taste, the greatest and most glorious of titles for a king.

The letters he wrote to the belligerant powers in tender of his mediation, have not been approved of here. Had he not been so old, he would have well foreseen that it would be disregarded. A mediator ought to be perfectly neuter : but a father-in-law is not deemed to be so in a question between his son-in-law and his enemies. Yet this irregular step does him honor in the main : he took it through pure love of humble humanity ; which proves

proves the ceaseless sport of the ambition
of princes.

You see, my dearest, that I ever re-lapse into morality. It is a subject I love, and which suits me for many reasons : you will taste them yourself one day as strongly as I now do.

The peace is almost concluded, and we rejoice at it like gamesters, who after losing almost their all, make shift to save some pieces which may enable them to try their fortune another time. Farewel, my charming countess, rejoice also with us, and love me ——

L E T-

LETTER LXVII.

To the same.

YES, madam, I have seen something of the new *Eloisa*: but I had not patience to see her out. What a slut that *Julia d'Etanges*! What argumentation and cant to consent at last! I fear poor Rousseau is a little crackt in spite of all his merit. He has so singular notions, he writes in so odd and arrogant a manner, that I have no good opinion of his head-piece: for wisdom is simple, smooth, mild and social. The man's madness is to expect admiration from his behavior as well as from his writings. He takes as much pains to be whimsical, morose, rude, as others to be entertaining, cheerful and polite. Some time ago having learnt that he was poor, I wanted to send him a trifle. But I was apprised that, in order to perform this good work, I must use some artifice to elude his delicacy, or his pride, as you please to call it. I sent therefore a person who carried him some music to copy. He executed the task,

task, for which I had not the smallest occasion ; and a hundred louis were told him down for his pains. *No, no : it is too much,* said the hangman, *I must have but twelve livres.* Taking therefore twelve livres, he left the rest, and shut himself up immediately in his cavern, in order to hug and admire himself. You will own to me, my dear, that this is an original of a new species. The ancient cynics despised every thing, gold, table, pleasures, and kings, in order to value only themselves. Poor Rousseau is not unlike those philosophers, and is but the more to be pitied. The cynics were honored with numerous admirers, and had sometimes the satisfaction of insulting kings who were kind enough to come and see them. But those days are no more, and I do not believe that ever John-James will have the pleasure of saying to Lewis XV. *Get away from between me and the sun.* Yet I admire his eloquence and his strength of stile. I have done good to persons of much less value than he, and gladly would have obliged him, if he had so chosen. After all, the man is not an author for me : he is too gloomy, ever growling, snapping, wrangling ; and that does not please me. I am for a philosophy

losophy amiable, gentle, touching, without wire-drawn quibblings, lawyers argumentations, and above all without ill-humor. Are not you of my taste?

Show this letter to nobody : let us read and judge the books for ourselves, without arrogance or affectation. Here is a long letter about nothing ; but I had nothing to tell you, and I love to write to you. I could tell you that we are going to have peace, that this peace will be an humbling one ; that the count is ever pleasing to the king, and that I love you with my whole heart : but all this you know. Farewel, my friend, remember always the fair goddess, who is no longer either goddess or fair, and who cares not much about the matter.—

L E T-

* Th
formerly

LETTER LXVIII.

To the same.

1762:

YOU are always talking to me about poor M—.* I suffer him, but am not obliged to esteem him. I tell him sometimes: "My poor friend, you ought "to consider what you were, rather than "what you are: I was in hopes that va- "nity would make you a gentleman, "and I have been disappointed. You "assume airs of a man of fashion, that "are insupportable in those that are born "men of fashion, but ridiculous in a "man like you." Well, he hears all this, owns me in the right, thanks me, and goes directly to have himself dubbed *my lord* by D—and such fellows. As I despair of mending him, I have resolved to let him incur the hatred and contempt of those who have the misfortune to approach him, since he is callous to both. I

* The marquis of Marigni, madam's brother; formerly Mr. Poisson, that is, Mr. Fish.

too

too sometimes call him *my lord*, and he sees not that I mock him. But leave we the poor fellow, and let us talk of you, my dear. You are good, unaffected, decent; you know the world, which esteems you; every body honors you, loves you, courts you. Continue to make yourself esteemed: it is the only solid pleasure of life, and I shall strive to share it with you. I fancy to myself that the great qualities of the persons I love are also mine: such is the delicacy of hearts which feel a mutual fondness like ours.

What shall I tell you about the duke of B——*. We received him as an angel of peace: but that angel old and unamiable. He paid me a visit in form, and I received him without ceremony. He talks pretty well, but reasons very badly; and appears to me to have no clear head: so is he the best ambassador that could have been sent us. The first quality of a public minister is that of lying well for the good of his country. The duke lies like the rest, but he has not the art of lying well. They say also that he loves the pistoles of Spain, and has

* Bedford.

no aversion to the louis-dors of France ; and that he holds it an inviolable rule, first to consult his own interest, and then that of others. I wish it were true, but I do not believe it : he is rich enough to be out of temptation. Our ministers have daily conferences with him : he talked at first very big. As this was expected, it did not terrify. In five or six hours time all his secrets were smoaked, what he meant to tell, and what he meant not to tell, without his excellency's suspecting aught of the matter : so that it is now as well known what the conditions of peace will be, as if it were already concluded with the king of Great-Britain, France, and Ireland. But now we twang those fine titles of good king George, the duke of Burgundy having seen them in a book, asked his governor yesterday, *whether there were two kings of France, and whether his grandpapa had a colleague.* He was answered that his grandpapa was really king of France, but there was another person who pretended to be so. The little prince burst out a laughing, and thought that other must be a very cdd man.

You doubtless know that poor Lally is lately arrested : he is accused of extorti-
on,

on, embezzlement, and all manner of crimes, excepting only cowardice. He is about to be served with his impeachment : I pity all the unfortunate : yet justice requires his suffering, if he has deserved it. I am very unfortunate too, though in another way. The public misery laid to my charge, the hatred of my enemies, weariness of the court, a bad health growing daily worse, the wrinkles which I begin to perceive upon my face, and which others have perceived before me; every thing in a word conduces to render my situation as dismal as others believe it pleasing. Yet am I not wholly pitiable, since I have a friend, to whom I can open my soul, who sincerely pities and consoles me. Who would have told me, a dozen years ago, that I should stand in need of consolations? Farewell, my dearest ; I am going to weep and think of you.

L E T -

LETTER LXIX.

To the Marshal de Noailles. 1762.

WHAT you write to me on the subject of the present negotiation with England is perhaps but too true. She is almost as much burdened as we ; she has an enormous and alarming debt ; her wealth is but paper, and what supports her is solely her credit, which begins however to sink. Perhaps, if the war continued but one other year, the English would be driven to bankruptcy, or to reduce the interest of their funds ; which were to them equally fatal, and we should be amply avenged. All these reasons I comprehend ; I approve them, and am obliged to you for them. But the king is weary of the war ; he is master, and must be obeyed. Nevertheless, dear marshal, continue me your hints ; the singularity of my situation renders them necessary for me, and the superiority of your lights make me value them as highly as they deserve.

But why will you not come to court ? you would there find sincere friends, to whom

whom you might be useful, and who in their turn would be happy to serve you. Consider besides, that it is very inconvenient to have no other way of conferring but by letter: I do not tell you the half of what I should by word of mouth, and you cannot write to me half the things you could say, and which I have need to know. But you love your repose and your liberty: alas! you are much in the right, I envy you. Your son will be a gentleman worthy of you: but he is not yet so much a philosopher as his father: for he loves the world, like all young folks who know it not; and he will make his way. Your excellency may be assured that there is a certain person who will lend him every hand, and who has already done a small matter for him, till somewhat better come.

But to return to the English, do not you think it very hard to pay the subsistence of the prisoners they made from us? On this subject occurs a comparison, which to me seems a just one. Supposing a man should go and kidnap in the street the children of his neighbor, shall he therefore have a right to keep them seven years, and then insist that the neighbor shall pay their board, when they

they are restored to him? Is not this a double injustice? But unfortunately justice is out of the question: force has carried off the king's children, and force exacts payment of their expences. God be praised for every thing! but things go shockingly in this world, as said the philosopher Martin.

I embrace all your family: when shall you send me little Harriet? I sadly long to see her, though every time she renews my grief by recalling to my mind my dear Alexandrina, who had like her a good heart and fine face. Alas! death mercilessly snatched her from me, when I was upon the point of marrying her, and that in twenty-four hours time. How I do hate that death, not so much on my own account, as that of the persons I love, whom he plucks out of my arms! Could I write verses, like Voltaire, what a satire I should make upon him! but alas! I know it, in vain.

I beg you will examine Dubret's memorial: I have but hastily glanced it for want of time; but I believe there is something in it. I should be overjoyed that his project proved salutary and practicable in the beginning of the peace. France needs a good regimen to recover. She

is a patient getting out of a dangerous distemper, and who cannot be too guarded against a relapse. There are numbers of physicians daily addressing to the ministry medicines, which they pronounce excellent and infallible: but we dread quacks and empiricks. Do you, my lord, who are so well acquainted with the disorder of the state, supply us with good and safe remedies; or at least assist us to reject the bad and to know them. I expect a letter, and will have a very long one at once for my instruction. Farewel, my lord; be persuaded that no one holds you in higher esteem than does your humble servant.

L E T.

LETTER LXX.

To the countess of Baschi. 1762.

AT last, after six weeks conferences, compliments and patience, the preliminaries of peace are concluded; at which every body rejoices; for the war was a horrible burden. The king was returning from the chace, when they were presented to him. He signed them in his boots, declaring that he never had signed any thing with more pleasure. I believe however that the peace of 1735, by which he got Lorrain, was still more pleasing to sign: but this perhaps his majesty does not now remember. His good-nature stands here confess, and his love for his subjects; for he finds no other advantage in the peace than that of relieving his people; but this to a good king is a great deal. Do not you admire the singular conformity between the fortune of this excellent prince and that of Lewis XIV? Both had been prosperous, feared and respected by all Europe upwards of forty years, to which succeeded a long and deplorable chain of calamity,

lamity loss, and distress. What days alas! Could I ever have thought to live long enough to see *Lewis the well-beloved* a compassionate object, to whom an arrogant victor vouchsafes the favour of peace? A soldier who served in the last war under marshal Saxe, made answer one day to some foreigners who asked him his country: *I have the honour to be a Frenchman.* Who would dare to say as much at this day? Meantime all are in high glee about these preliminaries: all are embracing, caressing, congratulating. I wish joy may not make us as mad, as sorrow made us miserable.

Yesterday the little marchioness whom you know, ran up to me breathless, sweating, palpitating. Is it true, madam, said she to me, that the peace is made? No madam, said I to her; but it will be made. Ah! when, madam, replied she, for God's sake when will it be made? I asked her what interest so touching she took in the peace. She began to blush and play the child. At length I urged her, and discovered that there was an amiable man in the army, whom she wished very well, and that she heartily hated war and loved peace, upon his account. There is a specimen of our fair patriots.

To-morrow

To-morrow I go to *Belle-ville*, where I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you. Alone shall I be in the midst of the crowd, and shall see none but you, who are more to me than all besides. I desire you will give for me two hundred louis to the little La Vergue: I love that girl for her good behavior and her wit; nor shall I cease to do her kindness, while she continues to deserve it. But she must not know this comes from me: so shall we both avoid the appearance of vanity. I am well, and my brother; and you too, I hope. Farewel: I have not a long time been in so good humor as at present, by reason of this peace which must rejoice every body, and because I expect shortly to embrace you.

If you see that great hog of Na— buffet him well for me. I understand he has been wondrous gay in a certain place. I should be glad to know whether a loyal knight ought to riot in the absence of his dame. Oh horrid! To eat a burning amulet from a poor girl's bare backside. The adventure has transpired in spite of all his cunning, and is generally allowed to be a very paltry and cruel prank. We know even his accomplice. They have, it is said, given the girl fifty louis: that is

something, but no equivalent to the martyrdom which she must have undergone. It must be owned that the world is sometimes very mad and mischievous. Women themselves will also begin to exhibit. Some ladies have been named to me, returning from the country last week, stopt at an inn to refresh themselves; and sitting down to drink, they broke the glasses and panes in jolly emulation of the romps of men. What women! Farewell, once more. Do not you bid me have done?

L E T -

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LETTER LXXI.

To the same. 1762.

MY pleasure in seeing you has been very short, my dear countess: I know no other way of recalling it and of consoling myself, than that of writing to you. You know that we were as much transported at the conclusion of the preliminaries, as a poor dying patient, to whom the physician announces recovery. But very different news is the following. The English, that is to say, the merchants and low people, are spouting fire and fury; they talk of hanging the minister who shall dare to make peace, the minister who shall negotiate it, and the minister who shall approve it. The poor duke of B—* is a pitiable object, and trembles at the very idea of the reception he must meet at his return. But, say you, has not the king of England power to put an end to the war, and to make peace, when he thinks fit? By your leave, madam, he has the power. For what then has poor

* Bedford.

B—— to tremble? Madam, you are egregiously ignorant: do you not know that in England there is one king who sojourns at St. James's, seven or eight hundred other kings who assemble in parliament, and seven or eight millions who inhabit the cities and country? When the king of St. James's does any thing that displeases the other sovereigns, they begin with murmuring, scribbling, caballing; then they hang his ministers, and cut off his own head, or send him a packing, if they can. The same man who kisses his hand to-day for a place, shall make war upon him to-morrow, if refused a second; protesting always that he has no object but the public good. You see therefore, madam, that it is not so easy to conclude war as to commence it in that country of liberty and spleen. Yet I think the work is too far advanced to break off: we have many friends at the court of London and in parliament; they must finish what is so happily begun. I write therefore to the fair lady, who is so desirous of peace, not to lose courage, but to hope the best.

Yesterday was hunted down the finest stag of the park of Fontainbleau: my knight came, and on his knees presented to

to me the piece of honor: This gallantry I received with the air of a queen; as a natural homage paid to my beauty; for I fancied myself young and handsom: but to-day I fancy so no more. Tell madam de L—— that I shall see her with pleasure: I have already forgot the trick she played me, but not her merit, which I consider before all things: for it is better to be just than to be angry. I embrace you: will you not give me a new agreeable surprise?

LETTER LXXII.

To the same.

YOU had no need, my dear friend, to recommend the marquis : every body esteems him. I never knew a clearer head, or one more adapted to business. But must not forget to tell you that I had like to have broke my own. The point was to pass through a door : a lady would have me to go first, and I would by no means. Stepping back in the midst of this noble dispute, what does my foot but entangle in my gown ; and I, but fall on my face ? It has cost me however only a little bump, which is a glorious mark of my good breeding.

Here will quickly be played *Æsop at court* : will not you come thither ? we have in this court abundance of men that are indeed ugly as Esop, but very few so wise. I should be glad this could mend them, or at least make them more modest. The queen mentioned you yesterday, and inquired how you did : she has great esteem and friendship for every one of your stamp. This good princess is

is unquestionably the *virtuous woman*, painted by that Jewish king who was so fond of women: She sustains her age, her infirmities, her sorrows (for some she has) with a courage which fills me with admiration and astonishment. Her example exhibits the beauty of holiness. The king lives always with her, as an honest man lives with the wife he values: he is deeply touched with her virtue, and I believe that, if he survives her, he will sincerely regret her. Shall I tell you moreover what you know, that the dauphin does not love me? He yesterday gave me a new proof. He was passing in the gallery, and we met face to face near the door. I dropt him a profound courtsey, but he turned away his head with disdain. His dislike greatly grieves me, but renders me not unjust. That prince has great qualities, a good heart, and perhaps too much is better than too little. The thing for which I most admire him, is his attachment to the king: he loves him tenderly, and is perhaps the only heir who would shed sincere tears at the death of his father. Those virtues are rare, nor the less beautiful.

I sometimes examine my conscience, and when I there find a sincere and natural

tural regard for the good and true, I am smitten with a tendency towards a little self-esteem. I know that this does not suffice, and that virtue consists of somewhat more than sentiment. Yet I hope that in consequence of loving and longing for her, she at length will come. Again do you see me plunged into morality; never made I so many reflexions: it is a natural effect of age. If they tire you, pass them: but love me still. Farewel, my dearest; embrace me first on one cheek, and then on the other: good night, I am just going to bed and to dream of you.

L E T -

This evening I left town to visit a friend in the country, and returned to town yesterday afternoon. I have now got time to write, and I will do so.

LETTER LXXIII.

To the archbishop of PARIS.

I HAVE received your grace's letter, which surprises and afflicts me. It is here complained that the clergy make too much noise about nothing : I know at least that they cruelly vex the king. I could wish that certain prelates, instead of looking upon themselves as fathers of the church, and issuing mandates which the parliament burns and the nation despises, would on the contrary set us the example of moderation, modesty, and the love of peace. I am willing to believe that your confession tickets are excellent things ; but charity is a still more excellent. I tell you here, in the bitterness of my soul, that these quarrels grieve me, because they grieve the best of kings, and give scandal to the whole kingdom. If I mistake, however, I pray God to enlighten me. But at the same time I was willing to come to a clearance once for all with you. As for your jesuits you must give them up to the justice of the parliaments. A man who knows them well, told

told me yesterday, that they never did one good thing beside bringing the bark from Peru, and that their society has been the scourge of every king and state that have granted them toleration. It were impossible for me to serve them : but even though I could I would not ; I tell it you plainly. It appears that they have deserved to be destroyed : in which case, let them be so. I beseech you therefore, my lord, talk no more to me of the matter, and leave the king at rest. Remember you were a subject before you were a bishop. Yet you are my pastor ; and I beg your holy benediction.

P. S. I this moment receive a huge packet of letters : bishops beseeching my interest in favor of the society. I thus perceive in the kingdom an almost general combination of the clergy to save it, while almost all the laity unite to suppress it, and with great reason. I am going to beg also those bishops to let me alone, and to give me their holy benediction.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

To the duke of BROGLIO.

YOU joke me, my lord-duke, with your compliments. I was greatly affected with your disgrace, and I murmured within myself to see a man of spirit on ill terms with his prince, while so many little low cringing fellows lift aloft their heads, and fancy themselves something, because they are successful. The king was much prepossessed, but at length he has opened his eyes to your merit, and the dastard envy of your enemies. True it is that I dropt a hint upon the subject, which has perhaps done it no harm: such is your obligation to me, or rather mine to you: for my duty and my pleasure are to serve oppressed merit. All the foreigners I see are incessantly extolling you, particularly the Spanish ambassador, who is a critic in men. I am very sorry that your friend should have quitted us to go to Denmark: some ground of discontent has been given him, and some beginning of repentance has been made. What shall become then of France, if we disgust

disgust the only men who can adorn or defend her? Yet is there still a remedy, if he is not too far engaged: nor are we disinclined to give him satisfaction.

To return to your grace, I repeat it, I am overjoyed to see you again amongst us in favor, honor, and content: but no more of your thanks.

L E T -

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fobfaco moy assinbs bns solistq pno
hant hanc

LETTER LXXV.

To Mr. d' ALEMBERT.

YOU have done me pleasure by communicating to me your resolution with regard to going among the barbarians. You scorn, but politely, refuse offers, that would have dazzled most others. Such conduct is noble and generous: every body approves it. It is more glorious for a philosopher to enjoy at peace, in the heart of his country and in mediocrity, the reputation he has acquired by his labors, than to go to seek elsewhere riches and honors; which, after all, would not render him happier. I have read somewhat of your work upon the jesuits, and think it as finely written as it is strong and rational. Those folks have doubtless earned their disgrace, and methinks they are still treated with indulgence. I am amazed that your friend Voltaire should be silent about them; he who does so fine things upon every occurrence. I repeat

peat to you in conclusion, that every one praises and admires your conduct, which deserves to be rewarded, and shall be so.

I am, &c.

YOU will note my passage in
commenting on the year 1820.
The following is right and well
and I hope you will give it full
blow and also tell your friends
about it. It requires a good deal of time
and trouble to get up a collection of
such facts and to read them over again
and over again. But it is well worth the
trouble. And when you have got it
done how nice it is to know all about
such things as it should be. And if
you don't want the paper it is
not much trouble to get rid of it.
LET-
ter to Mr. Wm. C. Jones from the
Author of his book upon the
losses of the Author of the
Book. Dear Sir, I am sorry to tell you
that I have lost my copy of the
Book. I am very sorry for this loss
and I hope you will excuse me for
not being able to return it to you
as soon as possible. I will do
my best to replace it as soon as
possible. I hope you will accept
my apologies for this loss.

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LETTER LXXVI.

To Mr. de VOLTAIRE.

I THANK you much for the book you sent me; every thing in it is beautiful, every thing true; and you are always the first man in the world for writing and for thinking. You have great reason to preach toleration; but the ignorant cannot, and the hypocrites will not understand you. When the execution of the unfortunate Calas was mentioned to me, I thought at first the scene had passed among cannibals: but I was told it had just happened among the savages of Toulouse, in a city where the holy inquisition has been founded; and I no longer wondered. I read some passages of your work to the king, who was touched with them. He is firmly resolved to avenge and restore the memory at least of that venerable old man: for my part, I should not be sorry that his judges were sent to the galleys. The good town of Toulouse is said to be wondrous devout: God preserve me from ever being devout in such manner!

To

To return to you, my dear sir; is it possible to write on with so much spirit at your age? Continue to instruct mankind: great is the need: as for me, I shall not cease to read and to admire you. Somebody had the insolence t'other day to address to me verses most injurious to the king and to myself. One person would insist that it was you who had written them. I retorted that they could not be yours, because they were bad ones, and because I had never done you any harm: you thus see what I think at once of your genius and your justice. I willingly forgive my own enemies, but do not so easily forgive the enemies of his majesty; nor should I greatly grieve, if the author of those same verses were to spend some time at Bicêtre, to mourn his sins, his calumnies and his poetry together.

Is it true that you have been dangerously ill, and received the sacrament with an exemplary devotion? The former piece of news I learnt, with concern, the latter with satisfaction; because it confirms me in the good opinion I ever entertained of you on the score of religion. Yet do what you will, you never will shut the mouths of your despicable, but dangerous enemies. Mr. d'Argouge

dropt on the subject: *Ab! the old sinner: he never believes in God, but when he has the fever.* I rated him soundly, declaring that there was neither truth nor charity in such insinuation. Farewel, my Phœbus; the good accounts I have of your health are supremely pleasing: my pleasure were complete, could I do you any, and see France in better condition.

Now on this day, having driven
such weather from town, I am belated
from the company, so that an answer
to you. I allowed out most of the
day to visit a small village six miles
distant along the river, but now
I general morrow will do you much hon-
or with a visit before I return. I bid
you adieu, and that you rest well
yesterday and today, I have had
a little review of late, and
now shall sit to talk with you. I
have no time to go to town, but
will call on you when I can. I
will write again to-morrow. I have had
a good night, and am well. **L E T**
T. This is the first time I have signed my name. Well
and all. A good year to you, and to all the
best friends you have. I will sign
again.

LETTER LXXVII.

To the countess of Baschi.

I SAW yesterday, my fair countess, the exhibition of pictures at the Louvre: where I found my own face in several places; and yet it no where pleased me. I own, in all humility, that it was no fault of the painters: I came only too soon into the world. A face of forty differs widely from a face of eighteen; and, whatever be one's fortitude, one thinks not of that without feeling. I hold it a general maxim, that a fine woman fears death less than the loss of her prime: whoever maintains the contrary is either a liar or a beast.

But now I think of it, however oddly; I have received the visit of the little wife of the new financer. She expressed a thousand regards for me, in that coarsely-kind and sincere way, of which I am so fond. The new minister plumes himself on being an honest man: alas! they are all so four and twenty hours. He has begun his reform with the king's breeches, whom

whom he yesterday asked how many pair he might use in a year. Why, said the king, I am often on horseback; I suppose I may wear a pair in three days. That amounts in all to but about ten dozen, said the controuler: behold the breeches stated to your majesty's account last year; only nine hundred pair. The spirited œconomist went next to the madams of France, and pulling out of his pocket some pairs of white gloves, begged to know how they liked them. They are very pretty, said the princesses. Very well, replied the controuler, they stand me in but twenty-pence a pair; yours stood you in fifty: I shall have the honor to supply you for the future. You see, my dear, that the man begins well: but there are greater reforms to make than that of breeches or gloves. We want to borrow: but the French have nothing to lend, and foreigners will lend nothing. Our credit is gone: we have now neither mortgages, nor free funds for the security of the lenders. Laval was telling yesterday that a Portuguese general having occasion for money, applied to some merchants who lent him two hundred thousand pistoles on his beard. I do not know what value the Dutch, for instance, may
set

set on the king's beard; but I am very sure they would not lend twenty ducats on that pledge. There was a talk some time ago of hanging the farmers-general: but they have powerful friends, who pretend that they are the pillars of the state; while others alledge that they support the state, like the rope which supports a wretch on the gallows: what think you? One thing certain is, that we are in abject misery. Heretofore France was hated, but feared: now she is hated and despised. Though women be in general very indifferent about public matters, I neither can nor ought to be so: for which reason my letters have almost always a dull twang of politics, which were intolerable to any other than yourself.

I must not forget to tell you that the small-pox has been raging here some time: it has killed twenty in a fortnight, and worse than killed fifty others. Beware then of bringing at present your pretty face hither: I had almost as lief see you dead as ugly. I embrace you, my tender friend: strive to find some solace for our separation; and if any you do find, fail not to impart it. Farewel,

L E T -

LETTER LXXVIII.

To the same.

IYET tremble at the news I am going to tell you. A lifeguardman has been found covered with blood and wounds in his post. Hah! who put him in that pickle? say you. Patience, madam, and hear me. On being questioned about his assassins, he answers that they were two ugly-looking fellows, who wanted to force their way into the king's apartment. This adventure appeared astonishing, and spread a general alarm. He was re-examined, and at length it was discovered from his answers, that his assassin was himself. You must now be made acquainted with the poor fellow's motives. He counted that by giving himself five or six slashes in no very dangerous parts, every body would conclude that the king's life had been in imminent danger, and that consequently his courage and fidelity would be admired and rewarded. But he counted without his host: this odd affair has been judged of so great importance by the shocking con-

set on the king's beard; but I am very sure they would not lend twenty ducats on that pledge. There was a talk some time ago of hanging the farmers-general: but they have powerful friends, who pretend that they are the pillars of the state; while others alledge that they support the state, like the rope which supports a wretch on the gallows: what think you? One thing certain is, that we are in abject misery: Heretofore France was hated, but feared: now she is hated and despised. Though women be in general very indifferent about public matters, I neither can nor ought to be so: for which reason my letters have almost always a dull twang of politics, which were intolerable to any other than yourself.

I must not forget to tell you that the small-pox has been raging here some time: it has killed twenty in a fortnight, and worse than killed fifty others. Beware then of bringing at present your pretty face hither: I had almost as lief see you dead as ugly. I embrace you, my tender friend: strive to find some solace for our separation; and if any you do find, fail not to impart it. Farewel,

L E T-

LETTER LXXVIII.

To the same.

IYET tremble at the news I am going to tell you. A lifeguardman has been found covered with blood and wounds in his post. Hah! who put him in that pickle? say you. Patience, madam, and hear me. On being questioned about his assassins, he answers that they were two ugly-looking fellows, who wanted to force their way into the king's apartment. This adventure appeared astonishing, and spread a general alarm. He was re-examined, and at length it was discovered from his answers, that his assassin was himself. You must now be made acquainted with the poor fellow's motives. He counted that by giving himself five or six slashes in no very dangerous parts, every body would conclude that the king's life had been in imminent danger, and that consequently his courage and fidelity would be admired and rewarded. But he counted without his host: this odd affair has been judged of so great importance by the shocking con-

sequences it might have had, that rewarded he will be with death. All his fellow-soldiers are enraged at the infamy. For my part, I think the fellow was mad, and that it were perhaps cruel to hang a person who should be shut up in a cell. But others think otherwise; and they must decide.*

It is a charming casket you sent me: I amuse myself in filling it, though I have already but too many of those magnificent bawbles, that are subservient only to vanity. I shall love it however, because it comes from you. But talk I of loving? it is your daughter. I love more than your casket: fine features, fine eyes, fine shape, and the finest of all fine things, a fine heart. She has a crowd of admirers, of whom she appears to make no great account: I value her the more; for it is as hard to please as to deserve her. There is however one young man rich, amiable, and high-born, who might not be unsuitable. Nay, I do not think that she eyes him with the same indifference as the rest, for she is always very serious and reserved with him: and that

is

* Latouche was actually hanged.

is a symptom of the amorous malady, so far as I can remember. Could this match become pleasing to you, I have a strong fancy that it were not hard to effect it. It is the rage of old women to be match-makers, and you see by my humor that I am almost of the number. But for this I am easily solaced, when I think of my love for you; the solid pleasure of friendship more than compensates the turbulent delights of the passions. Farewel, my dear, make my love due returns.

LETTER LXXIX.

To the same.

THE moment you have read this letter, I desire, my dearest friend, you may order the horses to your coach, and drive to the marchioness of Laval's. Another purchase! shall I never tire of making purchases? Tell her then that I have her in my heart, and entreat her to think of what she well knows, while yet there is opportunity. She will tell you what it is; but do not scold me, if you disapprove the expence. The meagre ambassador is going to leave us; and nobody, I imagine, will regret him, except his butcher and taylor: his parts are no more lovely than his person. The king will give him his picture: it is not yet known who shall succeed him.

Is it true that the count goes to the waters of Plombieres? poor man! I pity him, if he needs them; and still more, if he does not. People resort to those places oftener for pleasure than advantage. You know a certain Mr. de Riom: well, he has expended upon them fifty thousand

thousand crowns a year. This is a good lesson : but who is it that improves good lessons ? Do therefore your utmost to break off the expedition, if it is not absolutely necessary. The great ox is very ill : it is hoped he will die ; he lives too long for his poor family, and some honest folks. Do you know that the jolly dutchess is arrived, who roams over all Europe alone like a trooper ? Surely nature has made a mistake in her formation : that woman must be a man. She yesterday waited on the king, who asked her the news of her travels, and whether London was more beautiful than Paris, "Sir," said she, "there are no fine houses at London ; but a vast many fine streets and fine faces, especially among the women." She soon sets out for Germany, which she has already visited twice, and promises us an account of her peregrinations ; which will without question be curious. I am obliged to conclude here. Give me one kiss, and I will return you a thousand, &c.

LETTER LXXX.

To the same.

I AM very angry with you. I looked for you this week: why have you not come? Did you know but the languor that devours my heart in this *terrestrial paradise*, as the ignorant call it, you would come and see me, if not out of inclination, at least out of charity. There is no man loveable but the king: all others move one's pity. As for the women, I shall say nothing of them: yet all the world runs after them. Gallantry is the rage of the French: other nations know to love. But talking of love, I believe your daughter is caught: the poor little thing knows not what I mean; she is innocence itself. All at once is she grown serious, solemn; and her eyes often look to have been weeping. Moreover, the youth I suspect has merit, and is far from displeasing me. I consider your family as my own: allow then friendship a fine thing, since it puts, so to say, the same soul in two bodies.

The

The poor city of Dunkirk has sent deputies hither, to make idle representations respecting the demolition of her harbor : the treaty of peace must be executed : what a pity ! the English are already talking of war : some say it will recommence in six months ; others in a twelve month. It is the way of that incongruous people : they lay a wager for an argument. But mark what dreadful news we learn from the English papers. You must know then, madam, that the emperor hates the French mortally ; that he will have back Lorraine without returning what he received in its stead : he is also to conquer Alsace and the three bishoprics, as ancient domains of the empire. His army is already in the field : it lies about Treves, where doubtless it is fallen from the clouds ; and all this torrent is to burst upon poor France in the spring. Such, madam, are the politics and prognostics the English write and believe ; and then they claim the denomination of sagacious and rational beings.

In spite of all their sagacity and reason, it looks as if they will have enough ado to establish themselves in Canada ; the savages still love the French, and do their new masters all the mischief they can.

do not believe there is a nation upon the earth that so happily possesses the art of getting itself hated as the English. So much the better ; they would be too dangerous, were they also amiable.

I have almost a mind to beat up your quarters one of these days ; but do not expect me, for then were it no surprise. Oh ! heavens ! what fine weather ! But why are you not here to make me think it still finer ? Farewel.

L E T-

LETTER LXXXL

To the same.

YOUR reflexions upon friendship are excellent, and would deserve to be printed for your own honor and the edification of others. The men pronounce it impossible for women to love each other sincerely. Your example suffices to refute them.

Yes, surely, I have seen the count of G——* he is a man who speaks indifferently, but thinks well. He is magnificent in all things, and so they will needs make him an ambassador. It is curious to see with what ardor our courtiers beg permission to go and ruin themselves in embassies: I admire the effects of vanity. It is a madness peculiar to the

* Guerchi, since ambassador at the court of London.

French nobility. Elsewhere they serve, and take care to be well paid ; but with us they pay to serve : this spirit may be useful to a state. The count then sets out with all speed ; he has solicited the honor of being my correspondent, and I have vouchsafed it him. So shall we have news. But on the subject of news, I was yesterday taking a walk with our little girl in my park : it was almost night, and we saw formidable things.. First appeared to us a huge white fantom : my gardener, who chanced to be in the way. Twenty paces off we despaired a giant all black : a large tree spoiled of its branches. A little farther we heard horrible cries : the children of the Swiss in a riot. Such, my dear, were our terrors : most of the fears of men are little less ridiculous.

Is it true that the square of Lewis XV. is as fine as they say ? I have not had time to view it properly. They are about to dedicate it ; but it is in the midst of victories that such ceremonies should be performed. Is it possible that the little duke should ever have thought of hating and speaking ill of me ? Another ungrateful to set down in my list. Is it true that you still love me ? That friend-
ship

ship is enough to me ; and notwithstanding the torrent of hates, impertinence and abhorrences, which I every day undergo, if you remain faithful to me, I shall be no object of pity. Accept, my dear the most tender embrace of your friend, &c.

LET.

LETTER LXXXII.

To madam de NEUILLI.

I HAVE just learned your quarrel with the haughty dutchess. She is in the wrong, and you are not in the right. Complaisance and regards must be shown in the world, without which life is a load both to us and ours. Every one has weaknesses, and women especially: let us bear with the faults of each other, or retreat into the woods, if we cannot live with men. The dutchess is proud, hasty and giddy; but she has a good heart, and I believe her fault involuntary. I will absolutely reconcile you, and make you embrace. Those petty wars of women are always ridiculous, and make the men laugh, who in such case bravely cut each others throats, without staying to scold and to squabble.

The nuncio is to make his entry this week. I shall send thither the little St. Ives, who is very curious, to see those little things. Will you be so good, my dear lady, to take the charge of her, and to bring her afterwards back to Belle-vue, where

where we shall spend the evening as agreeably as women can. I saw yesterday the little count: he is very handsome; he puts me always in mind of my poor Alexandrian, who had much of his air. I salute you with all my heart: love every body, and be angry with no body: for anger is very bad for the health.

I am, &c.

L E T.

LETTER LXXXII.

To the countess of B A S C H I.

ONE of the peculiar joys of my situation, is to be obliged to show politeness and put on kind looks to persons whom I hate, or who hate me. I this morning received the little dutchess's visit. Ah! what a shocking creature! How she lisps, how she languishes! One would think she had been sent into the world for no other purpose than to have vapors, and gaze in the glass. From that woman had I to undergo a thousand extravagant compliments, to hear a thousand impertinences, and to receive a thousand counterfeit caresses. I more and more experience that *good company* is detestable: come quickly, embrace and comfort me. It is astonishing to see with what care our women study the art of pleasing, which can avail them but ten or twelve years at the most, while they neglect their intellectual part, which should stand them in stead for life. This animal imagines herself created for no end but to have beauty and adventures. Do you, and

my dear, who are beautiful with modesty,
and who please without attempting it,
continue to set our sex the example of
wisdom and good sense, and still love
those who love you.

I am, &c.

L E T -

LETTER LXXXIV.

To the same.

I KNOW then, at last, the marshal's good lady. I looked for a friend, and have found only a meddler without either wit or moderation. She wanted to destroy me : I forgive her, and shall do her no other harm than that of despising and avoiding her. My situation is highly unfortunate. I can neither know my friends nor my enemies : they have all the same show of regard, the same politeness and the same language. Ah! how I hate this mean flattering world ! I should much prefer the honest freedom of savages, who love or hate avowedly. Among us they cringe, they caress, they embrace those they mean to ruin ; and all this is called the fair fashion of the world in civilised nations. You, my dear, are almost my single solace amid my various distress.

LET-

LETTER LXXXV.

To the same.

I YESTERDAY arrived at Fontainebleau dull, dispirited, out of humor. My most pleasing task is to write to you. I hold nothing hid from you, my bosom-friend : yet I know not if you receive my communications with the same pleasure that I bestow them. But I have need to bestow them, in order to disburden my heart. What then is the situation of the great! They live not but in futurity, nor are happy but in hope. Ambition has no happiness. I am ever melancholy, and often without reason. The kindnesses of the king, the regards of the courtiers, the attachment of my domesticks, and the fidelity of a very few friends; so many things concurring to render me happy, touch me jointly or severally no more. I had formerly a notion of becoming comfort to a king, and I flattered myself, that the best of princes might possibly do for me, what his great-grandfather had done for a widow of fifty. There was but one small obstacle to this pleasing plan : the great

great lady* and the little Norman† were both still alive. Such, my fair countess, were the chimeras that long amused this weak heart, which now scarce loves any thing but you. I have no longer any relish for what pleased me so much heretofore. I had my house at Paris magnificently furnished: well, that delighted me two days. That of Belle-vue is charming, and I alone cannot bear it. Charitable persons relate to me daily the anecdotes and adventures of the town; the relaters fancy I attend; but when they have done, I ask what they have been saying. In a word, I live no more, I am dead before my time; my kingdom is no longer of this world. All around conspire to embitter my remnant of life; imputing to me the public distress; the blunders of the cabinet, the misfortunes of the field, and the triumphs of our enemies. I am accused of selling every thing, of disposing of every thing, of governing every thing. T'other day when the king was at dinner, a good old man came up and besought his majesty,

* The queen.

† Mr. le Normand d'E'tioles, her husband.

be graciously pleased to recommend him to madam de Pompadour. The audience could not stifle a laugh at the simplicity of the poor man: but poorer I laughed none. Another presented some time ago to the council, an admirable expedient for raising money without incommoding the people: his project was to beseech me to lend the king a hundred millions. This fine plan was also laughed at, by every one but me. This general hatred and rancor of the nation sting me very deep; my life is a continual death. I ought doubtless to retire from court: but I am weak; and can neither endure nor quit it. I envy, my beloved friend, your happiness. Farewel, pity me, and if it be possible, afford me some consolation.

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